



YOUR VOTE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ IS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

YOUR  
VOICE

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THE VOTING RIGHTS OF HOOSIERS WITH DISABILITIES

HoosiersVote.org  
#HoosiersVote

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# “GET INTO POLITICS AS IF YOUR LIFE DEPENDED ON IT, BECAUSE IT DOES.”

-Justin Dart, *disability rights advocate*

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Thousands of people with disabilities in Indiana are on a waiting list for services. Medicaid recipients face cutbacks. Too many Hoosiers with disabilities are unemployed. These issues, and many others, are why citizens with disabilities – you – need to get involved in elections. Policymakers make decisions that impact most aspects of your daily life, so you need to have a say. Exercising your right to vote gives you a voice in this process.

## **NEARLY 1 IN 5 HOOSIERS HAS A DISABILITY.**

Citizens with disabilities have the potential to become a powerful political force, but this can happen only if you choose to use the power of the ballot. Your vote does make a difference.

**Count Us IN** launched in 2002 as a nonpartisan project of the Indiana Governor’s Council for People with Disabilities. Its goal is to increase the political influence of people with disabilities through heightened involvement in the electoral process.

The Indiana Governor’s Council for People with Disabilities continues its **Count Us IN** initiative for one reason: To ensure citizens with disabilities are full participants in Indiana’s electoral process.



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# ★ INTRODUCTION ★

EXCITING NEWS ABOUT VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES CAME IN 2008 WHEN A HARRIS POLL SURVEY, CONDUCTED BY THE KESSLER FOUNDATION AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATION ON DISABILITY FOUND THE VOTING GAP BETWEEN PEOPLE WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES WAS VIRTUALLY ELIMINATED. FIFTY-NINE PERCENT OF BOTH POPULATIONS SHOWED UP AT THE POLLS; HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH A VAST IMPROVEMENT, THIS NUMBER MEANS A REMARKABLE 41 PERCENT OF THE NATION'S POPULATION IS NOT VOTING.

The most recent “Indiana Disability Poll: A Focus on Voting” revealed these top five reasons for not voting:

- 1 I did not want to vote
- 2 I had no transportation to the polls
- 3 I had medical reasons
- 4 The polling place was not accessible
- 5 I was underage at the time of the last election

Indiana has been increasingly proactive about fixing accessibility issues across the state. The introduction of the Help America Vote Act in 2002, with implementation in Indiana in 2006, and other federal laws have helped improve accessibility to the polls. Through the Council's Count Us IN initiative, a team of voters with disabilities worked with the Indiana Election Commission and the Indiana Election Division in the Office of the Secretary of State to evaluate accessible voting systems, and local advisory councils composed of voters with disabilities, elderly voters and local election officials were formed to make recommendations for renovations or relocations to accessible sites.

In our country, we have the freedom and the opportunity to elect officials who align with our values and beliefs, and to hold those officials accountable to the promises they make. We must make the most of these freedoms. While there is progress still to be made, it is clear that every vote matters.

Use this booklet to educate yourself on election procedures, learn how our state is improving accessibility at the polls and be motivated by the relatively easy steps you can take to be an active and engaged citizen. Each and every vote counts, so make sure your voice is heard on Election Day. 🗳️

# INDIANA VOTERS' ★ BILL OF RIGHTS ★

VOTING IS ONE OF THE MOST BASIC WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM. IT'S A SIMPLE TWO-STEP PROCESS: REGISTER AND VOTE. INDIANA HAS ADOPTED A VOTERS' BILL OF RIGHTS TO DEFINE THE PRIVILEGES AND PROTECTIONS YOU HAVE AS A VOTER AND TO HELP KEEP ELECTIONS FAIR FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS.

You have the right to vote in an Indiana election if:

- 1 you are a U.S. citizen;
- 2 you are a resident of Indiana;
- 3 you will be at least 18 years of age at the next municipal or general election;
- 4 you have lived in the precinct where you vote for at least 30 days before the election;
- 5 you are not currently in prison after being convicted of a crime; and
- 6 you are registered to vote.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR NAME IS NOT ON THE LIST

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If your name does not appear on the poll list, you are still allowed to vote if one of the following fail-safe procedures applies to you:

### **CERTIFICATE OF ERROR**

If your name does not appear on the poll list because of an error by the county, the county must issue a Certificate of Error before you are allowed to cast a regular ballot.

### **WRITTEN AFFIRMATION**

If, at one time, you were registered to vote in this precinct, but your name no longer appears on the poll list, you may vote if you are willing to sign a written statement (or make an oral affirmation in the presence of the inspector or one of the judges) that you still live at the same address.

### **RECEIPT FROM VOTER REGISTRATION**

If your name does not appear on the poll list, but you have a receipt from a voter registration agency indicating that you applied to register while the registration period was still open (before the last 29 days before the election), and the county voter registration office does not have any record of receiving the application, then you may vote after the information on your receipt is recorded on the poll list and you fill out a voter registration application.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS DOES NOT MATCH THE POLL LIST

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If your name is on the poll list but the name or address listed does not match your current name or address, you may still qualify to vote if one of the following fail-safe procedures applies to you:

### **MOVED WITHIN THE PRECINCT OR NAME HAS CHANGED**

If your name is on the poll list but you have moved within the same precinct or your name has changed, you may vote if you sign the poll book with the new address or new name (example: married name, changed name because of divorce or adoption).

### **MOVED BUT STILL LIVE IN THE SAME COUNTY AND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

If you moved to another precinct that is still in the same county and congressional district, regardless of when you moved, you may vote at your old precinct one last time. You must sign an affidavit provided by local election officials or make an oral affirmation of these facts in the presence of the precinct election board before proceeding to vote.

## **MOVED WITHIN THE STATE OF INDIANA IN THE LAST 30 DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION**

If you moved to another precinct in Indiana within the final 30 days before the election, you may vote in your old precinct one last time by signing an affidavit provided by local election officials.

## **MOVED OUTSIDE THE STATE OF INDIANA IN THE LAST 30 DAYS BEFORE A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

If you moved from an Indiana precinct to a new residence outside of Indiana within the final 30 days before Election Day, you may vote at your old precinct one last time by signing an affidavit provided by local election officials. However, you will only be given a ballot to vote for president and vice president.

## **OTHER VOTER PROTECTIONS**

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### **VOTERS NEEDING ASSISTANCE**

If you need assistance at the polls because you have a disability or cannot read or write English, **you have the right to receive assistance to cast a vote in every election.** The person assisting can be a poll worker or someone you choose. However, your employer or union representative cannot assist you. The person you choose must sign an affidavit before assisting you.

### **ACCESSIBLE POLLS**

You have the right to a polling place that is accessible to people with disabilities.

### **TRAVELING VOTING BOARDS**

If you are confined due to illness or disability, you have the right to vote absentee at your place of confinement before a traveling absentee voting board.

### **SPOILED BALLOTS**

Your ballot is “spoiled” if you vote for too many candidates running for the same office or if you vote by mistake for a candidate for whom you did not intend to vote. If you spoil your ballot, you have the right to return the spoiled ballot to the inspector and receive another ballot in order to cast a vote in that election.

### **WAITING AT THE POLLS AT CLOSING**

If you have begun the process of voting, or are waiting to begin the process of voting, before the closing of the polls at 6 p.m., you have the right to cast a vote in that election.

### **CASTING A PROVISIONAL BALLOT**

You have the right to cast a provisional ballot if there is a question about your qualification to vote in the precinct which is not resolved by a fail-safe procedure, and you believe you are qualified to vote in the precinct. You may also cast a provisional ballot if you have been challenged

as not qualified to vote in your precinct (example: you did not have photo identification). See page 16 for more information.

Unless you qualify to use one of these fail-safe procedures, you are committing a felony if you vote at a polling place that you know is not your legal polling place.

## PRIMARY ELECTIONS



If you are affiliated with either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party, you are entitled to vote for candidates of that party at the primary election. However, you must state the party with which you are affiliated by asking the poll workers for the ballot of that party. You may only vote for candidates in the party whose ballot you select.

If you are not affiliated with either of these two parties, you are still entitled to vote on a public question that is held on the same day as the primary without asking for a party ballot. 🗳️

# ★ HOW TO VOTE IN INDIANA ★

“PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES MUST BE ENGAGED IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS TO ENSURE THAT OUR ACQUIRED RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED AND THAT IMPORTANT ISSUES ARE PUT SQUARELY BEFORE OUR REPRESENTATIVES.”

Janna Shisler, *former Council board member*

## STEP 1: REGISTER TO VOTE

The first step in exercising your constitutional right to vote for any elected official is to ensure you are a registered voter.

**To be eligible to register, you must:**

- 1 Be a citizen of the United States;
- 2 Be at least 18 years old on the day of the next general, municipal or special election;
- 3 Have lived in your precinct for at least 30 days before the next general, municipal or special election; and
- 4 Not currently be imprisoned after being convicted of a crime.

If you want to vote in the November general election or May primary election, your voter registration form must be completed and returned 29 days before the election to the voter registration office, the county clerk's office, any public assistance office or a BMV license branch. You may register online by visiting **IndianaVoters.com**, as long as you have a current and valid Indiana driver's license or identification card. If you choose to register in person or by mail, you can print the voter registration form from the website or obtain a copy at your county's voter registration office.

The county voter registration office will process your application and, as long as you meet the eligibility requirements, the county office will send you a voter registration acknowledgment card.

## STEP 2: CAST YOUR BALLOT

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### PREPARE

In preparation for voting, county election boards and other groups often publish sample ballots before the election, so you can plan how you will vote ahead of time. **IndianaVoters.com** also offers you a way to see who will be on your ballot so you can fully educate yourself on the candidates.

## **ACCESSIBILITY AT THE POLLS**

In 2002, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to establish accessibility standards and ensure all U.S. elections are administered fairly. Under HAVA, all states must:

- ★ Create and maintain an accurate electronic list of registered voters.
- ★ Allow a voter to cast a provisional ballot if he or she is mistakenly omitted from a poll book.
- ★ Permit voters who encounter problems to file a grievance.
- ★ Provide each polling place with at least one voting machine that allows people with disabilities to cast a vote privately and independently.
- ★ Eliminate the use of punch card and lever voting systems.

States receive federal funds to help them reach these accessibility standards and to conduct public outreach encouraging every eligible voter to cast a ballot.

As required by HAVA, all Indiana polling locations must be equipped with at least one accessible voting machine located in a facility that meets detailed accessibility standards.

You have the right to cast a ballot privately and independently, and you cannot be denied the right to vote because of any mental, physical or sensory disability.

Furthermore, you may be assisted in the voting booth only if:

- 1 You request assistance before entering the booth;
- 2 You have a disability (permanent or temporary); or
- 3 You are unable to read or write the English language.

### **WHO MAY ASSIST A VOTER?**

- ★ The voter may designate anyone to assist him or her (a relative or friend), except his/her employer or a union officer.
- ★ If the voter requests assistance but does not designate a helper, two poll workers (one of each major political party) will assist.
- ★ No one who assists a voter may disclose any information about the voter's choices.

A person providing assistance to a voter (including poll workers) must complete the Affidavit of Voter Assistance at the Polls before entering the voting booth.

The following items should also be available to voters at any site:

- ★ Magnifiers for voters with visual impairments
- ★ Tape to hold ballots in place for voters unable to hold them
- ★ Chairs for voters unable to stand for extended periods of time

## DIFFERENT WAYS TO CAST YOUR BALLOT

To ensure voting is accessible for everyone, Indiana offers alternate options for casting a ballot:

### Absentee voting

If you are unable to visit your designated polling place during its hours of operation, you may be eligible to vote absentee. To vote absentee-in-person (also referred to as early voting), go to your county election board office any time beginning 28 days before Election Day. To vote absentee-by-mail or absentee-by-traveling board (wherein a ballot will be delivered in person by a bipartisan absentee voter board), complete an application several days before Election Day and return it to the county election board for approval. For more information, visit [in.gov/sos/elections/2402.htm](https://www.in.gov/sos/elections/2402.htm).

### Provisional ballot

Provisional voting is a way for a voter to cast a ballot at the polls on Election Day, even if they are challenged by the poll workers. Reasons for being challenged could include:

- ★ Being unable to present a valid photo ID
- ★ Name not included in the poll book
- ★ Name listed in the poll book but not as a current resident of the precinct
- ★ Voter not of voting age at time of election

If you do cast a provisional ballot, you have until noon 10 days after the election to present necessary documentation or a proper form of photo ID, or sign an affidavit for an exemption.

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**VOTING IS A CRITICAL CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT THAT ENABLES EVERY AMERICAN TO HAVE A VOICE IN THE WAY OUR NATION IS GOVERNED. SINCE THE PASSAGE OF HAVA, YOUR COUNTY CLERK AND THE INDIANA ELECTION DIVISION IN THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE CONTINUE WORKING TO ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY AT EVERY POLLING LOCATION.**

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Indiana Disability Rights has also been granted federal funds to ensure full participation within the electoral process for people with disabilities. IDR can answer questions regarding voting rights and can assist with the complaint process.

If you are unable to vote because your voting location isn't accessible, or you believe your civil right to vote has been violated in any way, call the HAVA hotline at 866-IN-1-VOTE (866-461-8683) or IDR at 1-800-622-4845 (voice) or 800-838-1131 (TTY). 📞

# TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN ★ ELECTIONS ★

CONTRIBUTE YOUR TIME AND EFFORTS TO THE  
VOTING PROCESS. CONSIDER ONE OF THE FOLLOWING  
WAYS TO BECOME A LEADER IN YOUR COMMUNITY  
AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO VOTE.

## REGISTER VOTERS

In Indiana, there is no legal authorization or training necessary to advocate voter registration in your own community. This advice from the Indiana Secretary of State's Election Division will help you conduct your own voter registration campaign:

### STARTING A DRIVE

- ★ Obtain voter registration forms from your local voter registration office, license branch, post office, public library or online at [IndianaVoters.com](https://www.IndianaVoters.com). Make sure you have other necessary supplies, such as pens, clipboards and volunteers.

- ★ Be creative with your registration table – decorate it with balloons and/or signs encouraging people to “Register to Vote Here.” Set up the table in a high traffic area where many people will notice it.
- ★ Don’t be shy – have volunteers standing with clipboards and registration forms in-hand, ready to ask passers-by if they are registered to vote.
- ★ Have fun! You are helping Hoosiers fulfill one of their most important civic responsibilities – be proud of what you are doing!
- ★ Remember, Indiana law prohibits any benefit or “reward” (such as gift cards, candy, school credits, etc.) from being provided in exchange for registering to vote or voting.
- ★ When you have completed your registration drive, store the completed voter registration forms in a safe place until you are able to return them to the county voter registration office or the county clerk’s office. The registration forms should be returned within 10 days.

## QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT BE ASKED

### Do I have to register by political party in Indiana?

No, Indiana does not register voters by political party.

### Do I have to re-register if I move?

Yes. Voters are required to notify their county election board if they move. If you move within 30 days of an election, you may vote in your old precinct for that election.

### Do I have to re-register for each election?

No, you only need to register once. Check to see if you are registered by visiting [IndianaVoters.com](http://IndianaVoters.com) or by calling your county clerk or county voter registration office.

To learn more, as well as to print voter registration forms and find other helpful handouts, visit [in.gov/sos/elections](http://in.gov/sos/elections).

## WORK THE POLLS

Poll workers are in short supply in many Indiana communities. If you volunteer as a precinct officer, you'll be compensated for your time. To sign up, contact your county election office or your political party's county office.

Poll workers complete training either online or at a location determined by the county clerk. Precinct officers may be assigned to one of the following positions.

### Inspector

Checks voter IDs, receives/returns election materials from the county election board, sets up the polling place, and inspects and tabulates ballots.

## Judge

A member of the Inspector's opposing political party who acts as a check and balance. A judge assists with ballot inspection, oversees ballot deposits into the ballot boxes, helps with vote tabulation and accompanies the Inspector when he/she returns election materials.

## Sheriff

Monitors the polling place to maintain order; calls upon law enforcement if a violation of the law occurs or appears imminent.

## Poll Clerk

Verifies voter registration status, oversees poll lists or books, assists in vote tabulation and compares voter signatures on poll lists with their registration signatures.

For more information on how you can assist with voter registration and working at the polls, visit the U.S. Election Assistance Commission website at [eac.gov](http://eac.gov) or the Elections page of the Indiana Secretary of State's website, [in.gov/sos/elections](http://in.gov/sos/elections).

## **ORGANIZE A CANDIDATE FORUM**

Consider organizing a discussion forum at an accessible location to give candidates the opportunity to explain their platforms and answer questions from the community. Forums are a great way to question candidates on tough issues. Prepare questions in advance that challenge

candidates to demonstrate their stances on issues by providing proof – such as their voting records, achievements in past political offices, etc. Be sure you’ve thoroughly researched each candidate’s platform and his/her record before conducting a forum. If a candidate is making promises that contradict the way he or she has voted or performed in the past, be sure to ask why he/she has changed positions.

The meeting may also be a good time to demonstrate and practice using accessible voting systems in your county.

### **VOLUNTEER FOR A CAMPAIGN**

It takes a lot of staffing to run a campaign, so every volunteer is valuable. If you want to help, call the candidate’s office and offer assistance. If you can stuff envelopes, make phone calls, pass out fliers or organize rallies, you will be a great asset!

### **GET OUT THE VOTE – GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM**

It’s only when people exercise their right to vote that significant change, such as the ADA, can happen. To encourage people with disabilities and their families in your area to “get out the vote” and become politically involved, consider the following ideas offered by “Word from Washington,” a newsletter and nonpartisan voting guide developed by the United Cerebral Palsy Association:

- ★ Post notices asking for volunteers to provide respite care for children with disabilities so parents have time to register and vote.
- ★ Organize a team to contact members of your disability community about registering. The team can also provide transportation on Election Day.
- ★ Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper in response to issues and platforms a candidate adopts that impact people with disabilities.
- ★ Survey candidates/legislators on their positions regarding disability-related issues. Share the results with your local disability community.
- ★ Bring voter registration forms to all your meetings or social gatherings. Set a goal to register one person per day or week. Call your local election board for forms.
- ★ Invite people with disabilities and family members to join a group that advises candidates/legislators on issues important to the disability community.

Citizens play an important role in elections that extends far beyond casting a vote. By getting involved in local elections, you'll become more educated about the election process while helping others and your community. 🌟

# CUT THROUGH THE CLUTTER AND ★ BE INFORMED ★

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THE WORLD OF POLITICS AND ELECTIONS IS CHANGING. FROM FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT'S REVOLUTIONARY USE OF THE RADIO, THE FIRST TELEVISED DEBATE BETWEEN RICHARD NIXON AND JOHN F. KENNEDY, AND EVEN THE SOCIAL MEDIA ERA OF ELECTIONS USHERED IN BY BARACK OBAMA, ALL CAMPAIGNS HAVE HAD AN UNPRECEDENTED APPROACH TO GETTING OUT THE VOTE.

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As times change, so do the methods of building a campaign. You have an obligation to know the facts about candidates before casting your ballot; but, with mudslinging, political missteps and distorted messages, it's easy to get lost. If you read the newspaper, watch TV or get your information online, you've likely been exposed to strategies that attempt to sway voter opinion. Are you being manipulated?

## **WHO ARE THE PLAYERS?**

As you vote for a candidate, you must first understand how that candidate appeared on the ballot. The name and platform for which you cast a ballot has been fashioned from teams, committees, strategists and financial supporters who have worked hard to compel you to take action.

Political consultants and strategists are among those who work relentlessly to get their candidate in office. Their job requires the raising and coordination of dollars – sometimes millions – to support the candidate’s communication efforts, volunteer armies, polling and research initiatives, and public appearances. They advise the candidate on an array of topics, making sure to highlight those that will attract the most votes. A consultant’s purpose is to ward off any negative perceptions that voters might have about a particular candidate and highlight positive perceptions.

### **INFLUENCING VOTES**

Professional campaigners are highly skilled in finding messages or topics that resonate with voters. High-profile political campaigns conduct research and use professional pollsters and focus groups to decide which programs to support or oppose and which messages need reworked or eliminated. They use the process of framing – crafting a time, place, mood and focus for a particular message – to convey certain information. Political parties use framing to arm themselves for debate and to promote positive features. For instance, do you prefer “taxpayers’ money” or “government funds” as a way to explain government spending? Are you outraged when you hear or see negative political ads, but are inspired by positive ones? Candidates are constantly planning and observing what frames build voter support. They work hard to make voting for their candidate an easy decision for you.

## CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

When contributing directly to a campaign or party, the judicial system set clearly defined limits on the amount of money that can be given. In 2010, new Supreme Court rulings gave updated parameters to those who wished to contribute to campaigns, and officially declared a corporate entity, such as a business, would be considered the same as a single individual when giving money to a campaign. This paved the way for even more dollars to flow into campaigns and created four primary types of donors – individuals, PACs (political action committees), “super” PACs and social welfare groups.

### Individuals

An individual is someone who is not affiliated with a candidate or his/her campaign. Individuals are direct donors to a candidate, national or local party, but they become a PAC when they join resources with other individuals.

### PACs

These groups generally represent special interests. Like individuals, they are given limits on direct campaign donations, but they can spend as much as they want through ads or promotions to influence elections.

### Super PACs

The 2010 cases *Citizens United vs. FEC* and *SpeechNow.org vs. FEC* created the new term “super PACs.” Essentially, these are the same as PACs, but are recognized as larger

entities because large corporations are able to pool larger sums of money to spend on election advertising.

### Social welfare groups

PACs and super PACs have to register with the FEC and disclose who their donors are. However, many wealthy individuals (and corporations) would rather stay anonymous, so they form 501(c) organizations – the most common type being 501(c)(4) organizations, known as social welfare groups, where politics cannot be the group’s primary purpose. These groups can raise unlimited funds and do not have to publicly acknowledge their donors. They can also contribute funds to PACs simply in the name of the 501(c) organization. Social welfare group contributions are only bound by one IRS rule: They cannot spend more than 50 percent of their expenses on campaigns.

An additional, but rarely used, funding source for campaigns are public dollars, or federal funds. These funds are provided to qualifying candidates by the federal government, but there are strict eligibility requirements. The public funding program was established in an effort to reduce campaign contributions from large, private donors.

### **YOUR OBLIGATION**

The more educated and informed a voter is, the clearer the decision-making process. Take into consideration the following points before you cast your next ballot.

### A candidate's plan

It's easy to fall victim to media sound bites and political ads. They are specifically tailored to promote candidates and make promises, but they don't provide adequate substance. Instead of relying on buzzwords, make sure you understand how a promise will be fulfilled. Candidates' plans can typically be found on their election websites, but keep in mind that campaign websites are intended to persuade voters in a certain direction, so look to news articles and other credible websites/sources for analyses of candidates' plans and platforms.

### Information sources

Finding unbiased, honest information can be challenging. Fortunately, nonpartisan websites like **factcheck.org**, **politifact.com** and **opensecrets.org** help sort out fact and fiction in political rhetoric.

For an even more in-depth view of candidates' backgrounds, stances, interest group ratings and finances, look no further than Project Vote Smart (**votesmart.org**). Project Vote Smart is a nonpartisan, non-profit educational resource for voters and is funded by politically independent individuals and foundations.

In addition, a close relative, friend or religious leader who shares your same values can be a good source of advice when deciding which candidate is worth your vote.

### A candidate's worth

Voting for the “lesser of two evils” never makes sense because there will always be someone in office who doesn’t share your political views. Supporting a candidate who shares your beliefs will never be a wasted vote, even if it is a marginal candidate. It’s your job to campaign and build awareness for that candidate.

### The entire agenda

Age, and even looks and style, certainly help a candidate’s chances of winning, but those don’t matter when issues need to be resolved. If you’ve chosen a candidate based on one policy stance, you may not have the complete picture. You can obtain a more well-rounded perception of who you’re voting for by going to each candidate’s website, visiting a live candidate forum, or calling his or her office for more information.

### Don’t just rely on campaign rhetoric

A responsible citizen is a well-informed voter who thoroughly investigates the candidates, their stances on issues and the offices they seek.

It’s important to sort out facts from fiction. When reviewing incumbents, research past voting records on issues, speeches given to various audiences, media interviews, writings, and organizations and clubs to which they are members. New candidates also have a history – often with campaigns they have worked on, articles written, service on boards or

commissions, or maybe even running for a different office. They, too, may have given speeches or interviews or held membership in a club or organization.

Most importantly, check the consistency of candidates. Have the candidates' voting records matched the issues they support? Do the issues they support reflect both their personal and professional actions? Have they supported issues firmly or flip-flopped their stances to the point of confusion? These are all good questions to have answered by the time you enter the voting booth.

A political office also has far reaching tentacles. With congressional approval, the president has the power to nominate cabinet posts, Supreme Court and federal judges, and members to certain boards and commissions. Governors have the authority to appoint department heads and senior staff to agencies, members of boards and commissions, and judges. And, school board candidates are responsible for upholding education laws and the hiring and firing of the school superintendent locally.

Your vote won't just elect a candidate – it will affect federal and state laws and changes to national, state and local government policies.

## **DIG DEEP**

Get to work! Spend time learning about your candidates throughout the election season. As Thomas Jefferson said, “Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.” 🌟

# ★ GLOSSARY ★

## **ABSENTEE BALLOT**

A ballot marked by a registered voter and mailed before the election date. These ballots are often used by voters who are out of town, overseas or work at a polling station on Election Day. Voters who are sick or have a disability and cannot physically get to the polling station also use these ballots, as well as some senior citizens.

## **AT LARGE**

A U.S. lawmaker who represents an entire state or district, as opposed to a single congressional subdivision. In the U.S. House, seven states are represented by an “at large” representative: Alaska, Delaware, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont and Wyoming.

## **BANDWAGON**

A popular trend or issue that more and more politicians adopt to gain support from voters.

## **CAUCUS**

In the context of an election, a caucus occurs when party members hold a meeting to elect delegates to a state or national nominating convention. In the context of Congress, it is an

informal gathering where lawmakers meet to discuss issues of mutual concern and possibly plan policy for caucus members.

### **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

A geographical area that each member of the House represents. There are 435 congressional districts in the United States.

### **CONSTITUENT**

A citizen who resides in a particular congressional district.

### **COUNTY CLERK**

The county clerk oversees voter registration, candidacy filings and the implementation of elections for the county. The clerk appoints and supervises deputy officers, which are divided between the two major political parties to help with election tasks and to ensure polling locations are ready and accessible for voters.

### **DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

One of the two prominent political parties in the United States. The party was founded in 1828 when it split from Thomas Jefferson's Democratic-Republican Party. It is often described as the more "liberal" of the two major political parties, with roots in the working class and minority populations.

## **DIVIDED GOVERNMENT**

An instance in which one party controls the White House and the other party controls Congress.

## **EARMARK**

Money budgeted for a specific project in a congressional district. The term is often used in reference to pork barrel projects (see page 38).

## **ELECTION BOARD**

Each county has an election board that conducts elections, prepares ballots and administers election law within the county. The county clerk is an ex officio member, and two members from each of the opposing political parties are nominated by the clerk to serve on the board.

## **ELECTORAL COLLEGE**

Electors chosen from each state to elect the president and vice president of the United States, conceived because the Founding Fathers worried voters were not informed enough to select a president. Today, voters instead choose an elector from a particular party and that person votes for his or her party's candidate.

## **EXIT POLLS**

Surveys taken as voters exit a polling station. They are often used to predict which candidate has won before votes are officially counted.

### **FLIP-FLOPPER**

A candidate or politician who appears to waver on a particular issue.

### **GENERAL ELECTION**

Elections that occur every four years when the American electorate votes for members of Congress and the president. General Elections always happen on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

### **GERRYMANDERING**

The altering of electoral districts, in order to provide one party an electoral advantage over another. The word combines the name “Gerry” and the word “salamander.” In 1812, then Governor of Massachusetts Elbridge Gerry approved a law to the disadvantage of Jeffersonian Democrats, his electoral opponents. The word “salamander” was used to describe the appearance of that electoral district.

### **GRASSROOTS**

Political involvement that stems from members of a community rather than from established political organizations.

### **GREEN PARTY**

A political party in the United States that advocates environmentalism, non-violence, social justice and grassroots organizing. The majority of Greens are elected at a local level.

### **HARD MONEY**

Direct contributions to a candidate's campaign or to a political party.

### **HORSE RACE**

A way of depicting a political race to convey who's winning. Rather than focus on candidate issues, pundits will sometimes emphasize poll numbers, for example, and describe a campaign as they would a sporting event. Critics say stressing polling stats, however, diminishes the importance of policy platforms.

### **INCUMBENT**

The person currently holding a particular elected office.

### **INDEPENDENT**

A politician or voter who is not affiliated with any political party. Independents cannot vote in primary elections held solely for registered party members.

### **LIBERTARIAN PARTY**

A small, alternative political party advocating individual rights and limited government involvement in public affairs. Most Libertarian candidates are elected at a local level.

### **MIDTERM ELECTION**

Elections that occur every four years when the American electorate votes for members of Congress, but not the president.

## **MODERATE**

A term used to describe a voter that does not solely lean to the left (democrat/liberal) or to the right (republican/conservative) politically. Instead, this voter takes a position in the political center.

## **MUDSLINGING**

A personal attack made by one candidate or campaign against another.

## **NATIONAL PARTY CONVENTION**

In the summer preceding a presidential election, each major party officially introduces its presidential and vice presidential candidate, along with its platform, before a national audience.

## **NONPARTISAN**

A person or a group not involved in or influenced by a political party. In a nonpartisan election, candidates on the ballot are listed without party affiliation.

## **NOMINATION**

The act of officially naming a candidate for a political office.

## **PARTISAN**

A person or an organization that strongly supports a particular political party.

### **POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC)**

A group representing the interests of a company, trade group or similar organization that raises funds and gives them to particular candidates. Many PACs establish themselves before a candidate announces his intention to run. An organization becomes a “political action committee” (PAC) under the Federal Election Campaign Act by receiving contributions or reporting expenditures beyond \$1,000.

### **POLLING**

Surveying a sample group for the purpose of assessing opinions on a particular subject or candidate.  
(e.g. The Gallup Poll)

### **PORK/PORK BARREL**

An exchange of federal money for political support. A member of Congress, for example, may use government funds to sponsor a project in his home district in hopes of receiving future votes from constituents.

### **PRECINCT**

A district created for election purposes that contains at least one polling station. This is the smallest type of unit in the electoral system. A precinct has between 200 and 1,000 voters.

### **PRIMARY ELECTION**

An election in which voters select candidates from political parties to compete against each other in the general election.

In Indiana, voters must declare their party affiliation before voting and use a ballot consisting of their party's candidates.

### **REAPPORTIONMENT**

The redrawing of congressional district lines to reflect population changes determined by the U.S. Census.

### **REFERENDUM**

A proposed law, also called a ballot initiative, that is determined by voters.

### **REPUBLICAN PARTY**

One of the two prominent political parties in the United States. The party was formed in the early 1850s by anti-slavery activists. Abraham Lincoln was the first Republican president elected in 1860. Today, it is considered to be the more “conservative” political party on both social and fiscal issues.

### **SECRETARY OF STATE**

The secretary of state is the state's chief elections officer. This office also holds the elections division to assist with this responsibility.

### **SPECIAL INTEREST**

A person or group that influences Congress to act in favor of certain public policies.

### **SOFT MONEY**

Money that companies, unions or individuals may give to a political party to support “party-building” activities at the local or state level. Such contributions, however, are not regulated by the Federal Election Campaign Act. Consequently, soft money has become a way for parties to indirectly support candidates.

### **SOUND BITE**

A short segment of speech used in broadcast journalism. A famous example would be former President Richard Nixon’s statement, “I am not a crook.”

### **STRAIGHT TICKET**

A ballot on which all of the candidates nominated are of the same party. When this type of ballot appears, voters may check a single box to choose all candidates running under the same party.

### **SPLIT TICKET VOTING**

The act of voting for candidates of different political parties in the same election.

### **SUPER TUESDAY**

A phrase that refers to the Tuesday in a presidential election year, most often in early March, when several states hold primary elections.

### **SWING VOTER**

A voter who is not extremely loyal to a particular party and may cross party lines to select a candidate.

### **THIRD PARTY**

A party formed to compete with the top two dominant parties. For example, the Green Party is an alternative to the Republican and Democratic parties. 🗳️

# ★ RESOURCES ★

## **INDIANA ELECTION DIVISION, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

(317) 232-3939 or (800) 622-4941 (toll free)

[in.gov/sos/elections](http://in.gov/sos/elections)

Find information on voting, election results, links to candidate information, Help America Vote Act guidelines, campaign statistics, maps of districts and contact information for county voter registration offices. The website also provides links to online poll worker training, vote center information and sources to help you cast an informed ballot.

## **INDIANAVOTERS.COM**

866-IN-1-VOTE

[HAVAadministrator@sos.in.gov](mailto:HAVAadministrator@sos.in.gov)

This website is Indiana's statewide voter registration resource. It hosts a variety of links that help you:

- ★ Contact your county's voter registration office.
- ★ See who will be on your upcoming ballot.
- ★ Check your voter registration status.
- ★ Register to vote online.

**IndianaVoters.com** offers a free screen-reading tool that helps users who are visually impaired hear the contents of the webpage.

## **FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION**

(800) 424-9530 or (202) 219-3336 (TTY)

fec.gov

## **INDIANA POLITICAL PARTIES**

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### **INDIANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

(317) 231-7100 or (800) 223-3387 (toll free)

indems.org

✉ info@indems.org

### **INDIANA REPUBLICAN PARTY**

(317) 635-7561 or (800) 466-1087 (toll free)

indgop.org

✉ info@indgop.org

### **LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF INDIANA**

(317) 920-1994

lpin.org

✉ lpinhq@lpin.org

## **PUBLIC ADVOCACY/LOBBY GROUPS**

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Membership and/or policy information is free or available to the general public at individual rates (often discounted or free for members with disabilities or families of people with disabilities).

## INDIANA

### The ARC of Indiana

(317) 977-2375  
(800) 382-9100 (toll free)  
arcind.org  
✉ thearc@arcind.org

### Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana

(317) 205-3535  
citact.org  
✉ staff@citact.org

### The Indiana League of Women Voters

(317) 241-8683  
lwvin.org  
✉ info@lwvin.org

### Indiana NAMI (Mental Illness)

(317) 925-9399  
(800) 677-6442 (toll free)  
namiindiana.org  
✉ info@namiindiana.org

### Fifth Freedom

(260) 426-8789  
www.fifthfreedom.org  
✉ info@fifthfreedom.org

### Indiana Disability Rights

(317) 722-5555  
(800) 622-4845 (toll free)  
(800) 838-1131 (TTY)  
indianadisabilityrights.org  
✉ info@indianadisabilityrights.org

### Mental Health America of Indiana

(317) 638-3501  
(800) 555-6424 (toll free)  
mhai.net  
✉ info@mhai.net

### United Senior Action

(317) 634-0872  
usaindiana.org  
✉ info@usaindiana.org

## FEDERAL

### AFL-CIO

(202) 637-5000  
aflcio.org

### American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)

(202) 457-0046  
(800) 840-8844 (toll free)  
aapd.com/take-action

### The ARC Governmental Affairs Office

(202) 534-3700  
(800) 433-5255 (toll free)  
thearc.org  
✉ info@thearc.org

### CQ Roll Call

(202) 650-6500  
corporate.cqrollcall.com

### Families USA

(202) 628-3030  
familiesusa.org  
✉ info@familiesusa.org

### League of United Latin American Citizens

(202) 833-6130  
lulac.org

### The League of Women Voters

(202) 429-1965  
lww.org

### National Coalition on Black Civic Participation

(202) 659-4929  
ncbcp.org  
✉ ncbcp@ncbcp.org

### The National Council on Disability

(202) 272-2004  
(202) 272-2074 (TTY)  
ncd.gov  
✉ ncd@ncd.gov

### Mental Health America

(703) 684-7722  
(800) 969-6642 (toll free)  
nmha.org  
✉ info@mentalhealthamerica.net

### National Organization on Disability

(646) 505-1191  
nod.org  
✉ info@nod.org

### Disabled American Veterans

(877) 426-2838  
dav.org

### Paralyzed Veterans of America

(800) 424-8200  
(800) 795-4327 (TTY)  
pva.org  
✉ info@pva.org

**TASH - International  
Advocacy Association**

(202) 540-9020

tash.org

✉ info@tash.org

**United Cerebral Palsy**

(202) 776-0406

(800) 872-5827 (toll free)

ucp.org

✉ info@ucp.org

**Rock the Vote**

(202) 719-9910

rockthevote.com

**TRADE ORGANIZATIONS**

These groups provide access to information on legislative issues to the general public through organization websites. Membership is limited either to qualifying organizations or individuals from a specific field.

**INDIANA**

**Indiana Association for Home  
& Hospice Care, Inc. (IAHHC)**

(317) 775-6675

iahhc.org

✉ staff@iahhc.org

**Indiana Association of  
Rehabilitation Facilities  
(INARF)**

(317) 634-4957

inarf.org

✉ inarf@inarf.org

**FEDERAL**

**Consortium for Citizens  
with Disabilities**

(202) 783-2229

c-c-d.org

✉ info@c-c-d.org

## NEWS AND DEBATE ORGANIZATIONS

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### COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

debates.org

The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that sponsors and produces debates for the United States presidential and vice presidential candidates. CPD is also committed to providing educational materials and conducts research to improve debates. By visiting their website, you can learn how to organize or host your own DebateWatch viewing party, or you can download a checklist that will help you prepare your own local debate.

### INDIANA DEBATE COMMISSION

Indianadebatecommission.com

✉ [president@indianadebatecommission.com](mailto:president@indianadebatecommission.com)

The Indiana Debate Commission (IDC) is a state-incorporated, nonprofit debate organization. During election season, the IDC prepares debates for highly contested statewide political candidates and asks Hoosiers to provide questions. The IDC offers free satellite feeds to broadcasters and live web-streaming for online audiences.

## **CNN**

[cnn.com](http://cnn.com)

In addition to providing 24-hour news coverage, Cable News Network (CNN) provides up-to-date information on political candidates, campaign insights and election results before, during and after an election season. Check out their Political Ticker link for the latest news and analysis, and watch for upcoming debates hosted by the network.

## **FOXNEWS**

[foxnews.com](http://foxnews.com)

Each election cycle, FOXNews offers robust political commentary and information about candidates and the campaign. The cable news network also offers ways for voters to keep track of breaking and building news in the political arena.

For more national news broadcast websites, visit any of the following:

[ABCnews.go.com](http://ABCnews.go.com)

[CBSnews.com](http://CBSnews.com)

[NBCnews.com](http://NBCnews.com)

[c-span.org/politics](http://c-span.org/politics)

# INDIANA ★ ELECTION DATES ★

BELOW ARE SOME KEY DATES AND DEADLINES  
TO NOTE LEADING UP TO ELECTION DAY.



## PRIMARY ELECTIONS

The first Tuesday after  
the first Monday in May.

## VOTER REGISTRATION FORM DEADLINE

Postmarked 29 days before  
an election.

## ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATIONS

Received 8 days before  
an election.

## ABSENTEE BALLOT DEADLINE

Received by county clerk  
on Election Day.

## GENERAL ELECTIONS

The first Tuesday after the  
first Monday in November.

# WHO ARE YOUR ELECTED ★ OFFICIALS ★

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## DO YOU KNOW WHO REPRESENTS YOU AT THE COUNTY, STATE AND NATIONAL LEVELS?

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A great one-stop shop for election information is the Indiana Secretary of State’s website, [in.gov/sos/elections](http://in.gov/sos/elections). Click on the “Who are your elected officials?” link to explore an interactive map. After clicking “I Agree,” simply enter your address and search. A list of your officials – federal and local – and contact information including email, phone, mail or personal websites are available.

You can also click on “Office Descriptions” for more in-depth information about the duties of each position. 🗳️

# ★ MY CANDIDATES ★



AS LONG AS YOU'RE REGISTERED TO VOTE, YOU CAN FIND THE LIST OF ALL CANDIDATES WHO WILL APPEAR ON YOUR VOTING BALLOT AT INDIANAVOTERS.COM. JUST CLICK ON THE LINK TITLED "REVIEW CANDIDATES ON MY BALLOT," AND ENTER THE INFORMATION REQUESTED TO CONFIRM YOUR REGISTRATION.

ONCE YOU'VE RESEARCHED THE CANDIDATES AND MADE A DECISION, USE THIS SPACE TO REMEMBER THE NAMES OF THE CANDIDATES YOU WISH TO VOTE FOR ON ELECTION DAY. YOU ARE ALLOWED TO BRING A LIST OF CANDIDATES TO YOUR POLLING LOCATION.



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Candidate name

---

Candidate name

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Office

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Office

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Candidate name

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Candidate name

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Office

---

Office

Cut along this line and keep this list with you to stay prepared on Election Day!

---

Candidate name

---

Office

# BE PREPARED FOR ★ ELECTION DAY ★

## PLAN AHEAD

Double check your voter registration and find your polling place by visiting [IndianaVoters.com](https://www.IndianaVoters.com) or calling (866) IN-1-VOTE (866-461-8683). Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Election Day.

## BRING A PHOTO ID

Indiana law requires a government-issued photo ID before casting your ballot at the polls. To be accepted, your ID must:

- 1 Include your photo
- 2 Show your name, which must conform to the name on your voter registration card
- 3 Be current and display an expiration date
- 4 Be issued by the State of Indiana or the U.S. government

In most cases, an Indiana driver's license, Indiana photo ID card, military ID or U.S. passport is sufficient. If you don't have a valid photo ID, you can obtain one from any Bureau of Motor Vehicles location for free. For more information, visit [IN.gov/bmv](https://www.IN.gov/bmv) and click on "Identification Cards."

## **VOTE EARLY**

Take advantage of your county's absentee voting options. Voters who qualify may vote absentee by mail or absentee by traveling board by completing the ABS-1 form and returning it to your county election office.

## **FOLLOW THE SIGNS**

Your polling place should have signs with detailed directions on how to use the voting machines along with a list of your rights, information on provisional ballots and instructions for filing a complaint.

## **KNOW THE LAW**

Every polling place is required to have parking spaces, facilities and voting machines accessible to voters who are elderly or have disabilities.

## **HOOSIER VOTER HOTLINE**

For further assistance on Election Day, such as confirming voter registration, finding poll locations, or reporting concerns or violations of your voting rights, contact the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) office in the Indiana Election Division, Office of the Secretary of State at 866-IN-1-VOTE. HAVA staff is on hand to answer calls from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on business days and from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Election Day. Or, call Indiana Disability Rights at 1-800-622-4845. 📞

[Adapted from the Indiana Election Division, Office of the Secretary of State, "Five Things You Need to Know For Election Day"](#)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 866-IN-1-VOTE**

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This resource is brought to you by:



**GOVERNOR'S  
COUNCIL FOR  
PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES**



**INDIANA  
DISABILITY RIGHTS**

Equality Through Advocacy



**GOVERNOR'S  
COUNCIL FOR  
PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES**

INDIANA GOVERNMENT CENTER SOUTH  
402 W WASHINGTON ST ROOM E145  
INDIANAPOLIS IN 46204-2744

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**